



## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

### 40 CFR Part 180

[EPA-HQ-OPP-2020-0349; FRL-9550-01-OCSP]

### Potassium acetate; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance

**AGENCY:** Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

**ACTION:** Final rule.

**SUMMARY:** This regulation establishes an exemption from the requirement of a tolerance for residues of potassium acetate (CAS Reg. No. 127-08-2) when used as an inert ingredient (nutrient) in pesticide formulations applied to growing crops only. Valagro S.p.A. submitted a petition to EPA under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA), requesting establishment of an exemption from the requirement of a tolerance for potassium acetate. This regulation eliminates the need to establish a maximum permissible level for residues of potassium acetate when used in accordance with this exemption.

**DATES:** This regulation is effective [INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE *FEDERAL REGISTER*]. Objections and requests for hearings must be received on or before [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE *FEDERAL REGISTER*], and must be filed in accordance with the instructions provided in 40 CFR part 178 (see also Unit I.C. of the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**).

**ADDRESSES:** The docket for this action, identified by docket identification (ID) number EPA-HQ-OPP-2020-0349, is available at <https://www.regulations.gov> or at the Office of Pesticide Programs Regulatory Public Docket (OPP Docket) in the Environmental Protection Agency Docket Center (EPA/DC), West William Jefferson Clinton Bldg., Rm. 3334, 1301 Constitution Ave., NW., Washington, DC 20460-0001. The Public Reading Room is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays. The telephone number for the Public Reading Room is (202) 566-1744, and the telephone number for the OPP Docket is (703)

305-5805.

Due to the public health concerns related to COVID-19, the EPA Docket Center (EPA/DC) and Reading Room is closed to visitors with limited exceptions. The staff continues to provide remote customer service via email, phone, and webform. For the latest status information on EPA/DC services and docket access, visit <https://www.epa.gov/dockets>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Marietta Echeverria, Registration Division (7505P), Office of Pesticide Programs, Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW., Washington, DC 20460-0001; main telephone number: (703) 305-7090; email address: [RDFRNotices@epa.gov](mailto:RDFRNotices@epa.gov).

## **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

### **I. General Information**

#### *A. Does this action apply to me?*

You may be potentially affected by this action if you are an agricultural producer, food manufacturer, or pesticide manufacturer. The following list of North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) codes is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather provides a guide to help readers determine whether this document applies to them. Potentially affected entities may include:

- Crop production (NAICS code 111).
- Animal production (NAICS code 112).
- Food manufacturing (NAICS code 311).
- Pesticide manufacturing (NAICS code 32532).

#### *B. How can I get electronic access to other related information?*

You may access a frequently updated electronic version of 40 CFR part 180 through the Office of the Federal Register's e-CFR site at <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-40>.

#### *C. How can I file an objection or hearing request?*

Under FFDCA section 408(g), 21 U.S.C. 346a(g), any person may file an objection to

any aspect of this regulation and may also request a hearing on those objections. You must file your objection or request a hearing on this regulation in accordance with the instructions provided in 40 CFR part 178. To ensure proper receipt by EPA, you must identify docket ID number EPA-HQ-OPP-2020-0349 in the subject line on the first page of your submission. All objections and requests for a hearing must be in writing and must be received by the Hearing Clerk on or before [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE *FEDERAL REGISTER*]. Addresses for mail and hand delivery of objections and hearing requests are provided in 40 CFR 178.25(b).

In addition to filing an objection or hearing request with the Hearing Clerk as described in 40 CFR part 178, please submit a copy of the filing (excluding any Confidential Business Information (CBI)) for inclusion in the public docket. Information not marked confidential pursuant to 40 CFR part 2 may be disclosed publicly by EPA without prior notice. Submit the non-CBI copy of your objection or hearing request, identified by docket ID number EPA-HQ-OPP-2020-0349, by one of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal*: <https://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments. Do not submit electronically any information you consider to be CBI or other information whose disclosure is restricted by statute.

- *Mail*: OPP Docket, Environmental Protection Agency Docket Center (EPA/DC), (28221T), 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW., Washington, DC 20460-0001.

- *Hand Delivery*: To make special arrangements for hand delivery or delivery of boxed information, please follow the instructions at <https://www.epa.gov/dockets/contacts.html>. Additional instructions on commenting or visiting the docket, along with more information about dockets generally, is available at <https://www.epa.gov/dockets>.

## **II. Petition for Exemption**

In the *Federal Register* of September 10, 2020 (85 FR 55810) (FRL-10013-78), EPA issued a document pursuant to FFDCFA section 408, 21 U.S.C. 346a, announcing the filing of a

pesticide petition (PP IN-11369) by SciReg, Inc., on behalf of Valagro S.p.A., 12733 Director's Loop, Woodbridge, VA 22192. The petition requested that 40 CFR 180.920 be amended by establishing an exemption from the requirement of a tolerance for residues of potassium acetate (CAS Reg. No. 127-08-2) when used as an inert ingredient (nutrient) in pesticide formulations applied pre-harvest. That document referenced a summary of the petition prepared by SciReg, Inc., on behalf of Valagro S.p.A., the petitioner, which is available in the docket, <https://www.regulations.gov>. There were no comments received in response to the notice of filing.

### **III. Inert Ingredient Definition**

Inert ingredients are all ingredients that are not active ingredients as defined in 40 CFR 153.125 and include, but are not limited to, the following types of ingredients (except when they have a pesticidal efficacy of their own): solvents such as alcohols and hydrocarbons; surfactants such as polyoxyethylene polymers and fatty acids; carriers such as clay and diatomaceous earth; thickeners such as carrageenan and modified cellulose; wetting, spreading, and dispersing agents; propellants in aerosol dispensers; microencapsulating agents; and emulsifiers. The term "inert" is not intended to imply nontoxicity; the ingredient may or may not be chemically active. Generally, EPA has exempted inert ingredients from the requirement of a tolerance based on the low toxicity of the individual inert ingredients.

### **IV. Aggregate Risk Assessment and Determination of Safety**

Section 408(c)(2)(A)(i) of the FFDCFA allows EPA to establish an exemption from the requirement for a tolerance (the legal limit for a pesticide chemical residue in or on a food) only if EPA determines that the exemption is "safe." Section 408(c)(2)(A)(ii) of the FFDCFA defines "safe" to mean that EPA has determined that "there is a reasonable certainty that no harm will result from aggregate exposure to the pesticide chemical residue, including all anticipated dietary exposures and all other exposures for which there is reliable information." This includes exposure through drinking water and in residential settings, but it does not include occupational

exposure. Section 408(b)(2)(C) of FFDCA requires EPA to give special consideration to exposure of infants and children to the pesticide chemical residue in establishing an exemption and to “ensure that there is a reasonable certainty that no harm will result to infants and children from aggregate exposure to the pesticide chemical residue.”

EPA establishes exemptions from the requirement of a tolerance only in those cases where it can be clearly demonstrated that the risks from aggregate exposure to pesticide chemical residues under reasonably foreseeable circumstances will pose no harm to human health. In order to determine the risks from aggregate exposure to pesticide inert ingredients, the Agency considers the toxicity of the inert in conjunction with possible exposure to residues of the inert ingredient through food, drinking water, and through other exposures that occur as a result of pesticide use in residential settings. If EPA is able to determine that a tolerance is not necessary to ensure that there is a reasonable certainty that no harm will result from aggregate exposure to the inert ingredient, an exemption from the requirement of a tolerance may be established.

Consistent with FFDCA section 408(c)(2)(A), and the factors specified in FFDCA section 408(c)(2)(B), EPA has reviewed the available scientific data and other relevant information in support of this action. EPA has sufficient data to assess the hazards of and to make a determination on aggregate exposure to potassium acetate including exposure resulting from the exemption established by this action. EPA's assessment of exposures and risks associated with potassium acetate follows.

#### *A. Toxicological Profile*

EPA has evaluated the available toxicity data and considered their validity, completeness, and reliability as well as the relationship of the results of the studies to human risk. EPA has also considered available information concerning the variability of the sensitivities of major identifiable subgroups of consumers, including infants and children. Specific information on the studies received and the nature of the adverse effects caused by potassium acetate as well as the no-observed-adverse-effect-level (NOAEL) and the lowest-observed-adverse-effect-level

(LOAEL) from the toxicity studies are discussed in this unit.

Available acute toxicity studies show potassium acetate exhibits low oral, dermal, and inhalation toxicity. An eye irritation study showed mild effects, and a dermal irritation study showed no effect of treatment.

Potassium acetate is the potassium salt of acetic acid. In aqueous solutions potassium acetate dissociates to potassium and the acetate ion. As one of the salts of acetic acid, sodium acetate, like potassium acetate, dissociates in aqueous solutions to the acetate ion and a counter ion, in this case sodium. Based on their similarities (e.g., physical/chemical properties, chemical structure, subsequent dissociation into the acetate ion and corresponding anion) data on sodium acetate has been used to support the safety determination for potassium acetate when chemical specific data was not available.

No adverse effects of treatment were seen in rats treated with sodium acetate in either a 4-week oral toxicity study or a developmental toxicity study at the highest dose tested. Therefore, the NOAEL for the 4-week study was 3,600 mg/kg/day and the parental and developmental NOAELs were 1,000 mg/kg/day.

There was no evidence of carcinogenicity or neuropathological changes or effects reported in any of the studies on potassium acetate or sodium acetate. There were no *in vitro* mutagenic effects in mutagenicity testing with sodium acetate. Therefore, there is low concern for carcinogenicity or neurotoxicity for potassium acetate.

#### *B. Toxicological Points of Departure/Levels of Concern*

No toxicological endpoint of concern for potassium acetate has been identified in the database.

#### *C. Exposure Assessment*

1. *Dietary exposure from food, feed uses, and drinking water.* In evaluating dietary exposure to potassium acetate, EPA considered exposure under the current and proposed uses of potassium acetate. Dietary exposure to potassium acetate may occur from eating foods treated

with pesticide formulations containing this inert ingredient and drinking water containing runoff from soils containing the treated crops. In addition, potassium acetate is used as a food additive. However, no toxicological endpoint of concern was identified for potassium acetate, and therefore, a quantitative assessment of dietary exposure is not necessary.

2. *Non-dietary exposure.* The term “residential exposure” is used in this document to refer to non-occupational, non-dietary exposure (e.g., textiles (clothing and diapers), carpets, swimming pools, and hard surface disinfection on walls, floors, tables). Residential exposure to potassium acetate may occur based on its use as an inert ingredient in pesticide formulations registered for residential uses. Additional non-dietary exposure may occur from use of potassium acetate in consumer products. However, no toxicological endpoint of concern was identified for potassium acetate, and therefore, a quantitative residential exposure assessment for potassium acetate was not conducted.

3. *Cumulative effects from substances with a common mechanism of toxicity.* Section 408(b)(2)(D)(v) of FFDCA requires that, when considering whether to establish, modify, or revoke a tolerance or exemption, the Agency consider “available information” concerning the cumulative effects of a particular pesticide's residues and “other substances that have a common mechanism of toxicity.”

EPA has not found potassium acetate to share a common mechanism of toxicity with any other substances, and potassium acetate does not appear to produce a toxic metabolite produced by other substances. For the purposes of this action, therefore, EPA has assumed that potassium acetate does not have a common mechanism of toxicity with other substances. For information regarding EPA's efforts to determine which chemicals have a common mechanism of toxicity and to evaluate the cumulative effects of such chemicals, see EPA's website at <https://www.epa.gov/pesticides/cumulative>.

#### *D. Safety Factor for Infants and Children*

Section 408(b)(2)(C) of the FFDCA requires EPA to retain an additional tenfold margin

of safety in the case of threshold effects to ensure that there is a reasonable certainty that no harm will result to infants and children from aggregate exposure to the pesticide chemical residue. As noted in Unit IV.B., there is no indication of threshold effects being caused by potassium acetate. Due to the lack of any toxicological endpoints of concern, EPA conducted a qualitative assessment of potassium acetate, which does not use safety factors for assessing risk, and no additional safety factor is needed for assessing risk to infants and children.

#### *E. Aggregate Risks and Determination of Safety*

Taking into consideration all available information on potassium acetate, EPA has determined that there is a reasonable certainty that no harm to the general population or any population subgroup, including infants and children, will result from aggregate exposure to potassium acetate residues. Therefore, the establishment of an exemption from the requirement of a tolerance under 40 CFR 180.920 for residues of potassium acetate when used as an inert ingredient in pesticide formulations applied to growing crops is safe under FFDCA section 408.

#### **V. Analytical Enforcement Methodology**

An analytical method is not required for enforcement purposes since the Agency is establishing an exemption from the requirement of a tolerance without any numerical limitation.

#### **VI. Conclusions**

Therefore, an exemption from the requirement of a tolerance is established under 40 CFR 180.920 for potassium acetate (CAS Reg. No. 84632-65-5) when used as an inert ingredient (nutrient) in pesticide formulations applied to growing crops only.

#### **VII. Statutory and Executive Order Reviews**

This action establishes an exemption from the requirement of a tolerance under FFDCA section 408(d) in response to a petition submitted to the Agency. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has exempted these types of actions from review under Executive Order 12866, entitled "Regulatory Planning and Review" (58 FR 51735, October 4, 1993). Because this action has been exempted from review under Executive Order 12866, this action is not subject to

Executive Order 13211, entitled “Actions Concerning Regulations That Significantly Affect Energy Supply, Distribution, or Use” (66 FR 28355, May 22, 2001) or Executive Order 13045, entitled “Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks” (62 FR 19885, April 23, 1997). This action does not contain any information collections subject to OMB approval under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*), nor does it require any special considerations under Executive Order 12898, entitled “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations” (59 FR 7629, February 16, 1994).

Since tolerances and exemptions that are established on the basis of a petition under FFDCA section 408(d), such as the tolerance exemption in this final rule, do not require the issuance of a proposed rule, the requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (RFA) (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*), do not apply.

This action directly regulates growers, food processors, food handlers, and food retailers, not States or Tribes, nor does this action alter the relationships or distribution of power and responsibilities established by Congress in the preemption provisions of FFDCA section 408(n)(4). As such, the Agency has determined that this action will not have a substantial direct effect on States or Tribal Governments, on the relationship between the National Government and the States or Tribal Governments, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government or between the Federal Government and Indian Tribes. Thus, the Agency has determined that Executive Order 13132, entitled “Federalism” (64 FR 43255, August 10, 1999) and Executive Order 13175, entitled “Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments” (65 FR 67249, November 9, 2000) do not apply to this action. In addition, this action does not impose any enforceable duty or contain any unfunded mandate as described under Title II of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) (2 U.S.C. 1501 *et seq.*).

This action does not involve any technical standards that would require Agency consideration of voluntary consensus standards pursuant to section 12(d) of the National

Technology Transfer and Advancement Act (NTTAA) (15 U.S.C. 272 note).

### **VIII. Congressional Review Act**

Pursuant to the Congressional Review Act (5 U.S.C. 801 *et seq.*), EPA will submit a report containing this rule and other required information to the U.S. Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives, and the Comptroller General of the United States prior to publication of the rule in the *Federal Register*. This action is not a “major rule” as defined by 5 U.S.C. 804(2).

### **List of Subjects in 40 CFR Part 180**

Environmental protection, Administrative practice and procedure, Agricultural commodities, Pesticides and pests, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements.

Dated: February 17, 2022.

**Marietta Echeverria,**

*Acting Director, Registration Division, Office of Pesticide Programs.*

Therefore, for the reasons stated in the preamble, 40 CFR chapter I is amended as follows:

**PART 180--TOLERANCES AND EXEMPTIONS FOR PESTICIDE CHEMICAL RESIDUES IN FOOD**

1. The authority citation for part 180 continues to read as follows:

**Authority:** 21 U.S.C. 321(q), 346a and 371.

2. In §180.920, amend Table 1 to 180.920 by adding in alphabetical order the inert ingredient “Potassium acetate (CAS Reg. No. 127-08-2)” to read as follows:

**§ 180.920 Inert ingredients used pre-harvest; exemptions from the requirement of a tolerance.**

\* \* \* \* \*

**Table 1 to 180.920**

<b>Inert ingredients</b>	<b>Limits</b>	<b>Uses</b>
* * * * *		
Potassium acetate (CAS Reg. No. 127-08-2)		Nutrient
* * * * *		